

Unregulated Tobacco Products Maintain Addiction

USA Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

Tobacco manufacturers have responded to increased smoking regulations with the development of new “smoke free” tobacco products. These new products contain the same amount of nicotine, or even more, than a cigarette. Products include “dissolvable tobacco” made from finely milled tobacco and held together by food grade binders, teabags filled with flavored tobacco, and a battery powered “cigarette.”

Manufacturers market these products as a “socially acceptable” alternative to cigarette smoking, because there is no smoke, no spit, and no litter. But medical experts fear these products may discourage smokers from quitting by sustaining their nicotine addiction in a growing number of places where smoking is not allowed. For example, Soldiers are not allowed to use tobacco during Initial Entry Training. This break in tobacco use gives young Soldiers the chance to kick the tobacco habit. But these new tobacco products are easy to conceal, enabling Soldiers to use tobacco despite regulations.

These “alternatives” to smoking also present the potential for “dual use” – using the smokeless products along with cigarettes or other smokeless tobacco products. Smokers who use these products may get a higher dose of nicotine than they are used to, resulting in tremors, nausea, vomiting, agitation, and in more extreme cases, seizures, coma, and death. The health impact of such dual use has also not been studied.

Some manufacturers are marketing these products as aids to tobacco cessation, claiming the products are safe and risk-free. However, in July 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released an analysis of 19 varieties of electronic cigarettes that said half contained nitrosamines (the same carcinogen found in real cigarettes) and many contained diethylene glycol, the poisonous ingredient in antifreeze. The FDA has not approved dissolvable tobacco products or e-cigarettes as nicotine replacement therapies.

Individuals who want to quit tobacco should use scientifically proven methods such as counseling and telephone quit lines, and only use FDA-approved nicotine replacement therapies such as the patch and gum.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm173401.htm>

<https://www.acep.org/PrintFriendly.aspx?id=44740#story1>

http://www.in.gov/itpc/files/Dissolvable_Tobacco_Products.pdf